

SEO For Nonprofits: The Complete Guide To Ranking Higher



How to Use This Guide

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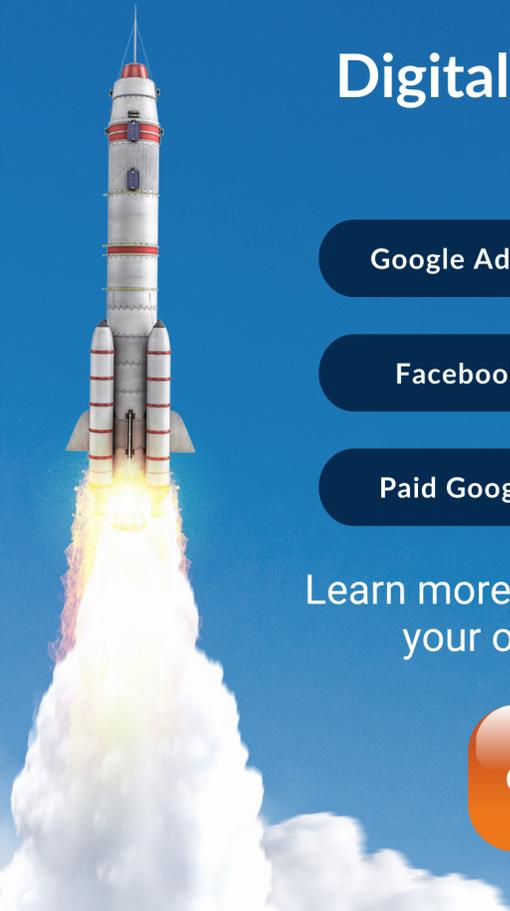
This guide is excellent for nonprofit marketers who want to create a clear and measurable SEO content plan for this year. It includes:

- **SEO Terms Glossary**
- **How To Grow With SEO Recording + Slides**
- **Recommended SEO Tools**
- **How To Create A Content Brief**
- **Completed Content Brief Example**
- **Blank Content Brief Template**
- **SEO Content Checklist**



Hi, We're Community Boost!

This guide was hand-crafted by a team of nonprofit marketing professionals at Community Boost. We are a caring, creative, and committed group of purpose-driven digital marketers, hyper-focused on sparking positive change for others and doing our part to accelerate social impact. Learn more by clicking the image below.



Digital Marketing Help For Nonprofits

- Google Ad Grants
- Recurring Giving
- Facebook Ads
- Conversion Design
- Paid Google Ads
- Email Marketing

Learn more about accelerating and scaling your online revenue and impact.

[Grow Your Nonprofit](#)

SEO Terms Glossary

We know SEO can be intimidating... here's a list of terms you should know before we get started.

SEO: Search Engine Optimization - practices designed to improve the appearance and positioning of web pages in organic search results.

Ranking: The order in which search results appear by relevance to the search term

Query: Words typed into the search engine bar

Backlinks: Links from other websites that direct to your website (also called an inbound link)

Internal links: Links in your own website that point to other pages within your website

External links: Links on your website that point to another website. (also called an outbound link)

Keywords: Ideas/topics/words/phrases that define what your content is about OR what a user may be typing into the search engine for more information

Keyword Research: Using SEO tools to discover what your target audience is searching for. You then use these terms to create your content.

Keyword difficulty: An SEO tool's metric of how difficult it is to rank for this keyword

Keyword density: Percentage of total words on a page that are the specific keyword

Alt-Text: Text that describes the images you are using on your web page (in HTML code)

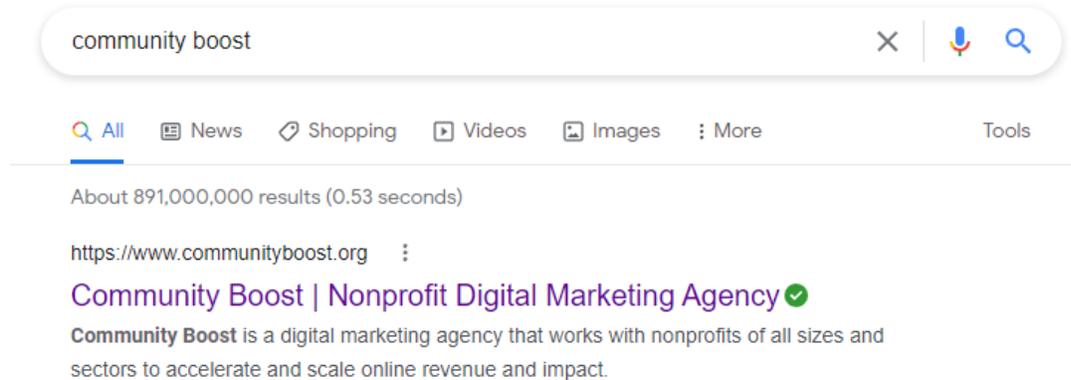
Title Tag: HTML element that specifies the title of your blog post or web page

Header Tag: An HTML element used to designate headings on your web page



H1: Header Tag 1 - The main title of your blog
H2: Header Tag 2 - Secondary titles within your blog
H3, H4, etc.

Meta Description: The description of your page that appears in the search engine results below the title / URL of your page (An HTML attribute)



Search Volume - The number of times a keyword was searched per month on average

HTML: Hypertext Transfer Protocol. How data is transferred from a computer server to a web browser

Organic Search Results: non-paid for search results that appear when using a search engine that cannot be bought or influenced by advertisers

Organic Traffic: Traffic from a search engine's organic results

Page Speed: The measurement of how long it takes your page to load

[Video] How To Grow With SEO: Planting The Seeds To Long-Term Success

The SEO process is a long-term investment and like any worthwhile investment, it takes time to grow. Join our in-house expert, Shukri Mohamed, as she walks you through specific tactics that will produce the best and longest-lasting impact on your organization.

[Watch the video here.](#)

[Video] How To Create A SEO Strategy For Your Nonprofit

This session will break down what search engine optimization is and how nonprofit marketers can use it to boost their website engagement. During this session, we will highlight the main pillars of SEO, how they can affect performance, and steps nonprofits can take to build their SEO strategy. Viewers can expect to learn about SEO fundamentals and receive insights into how to apply those fundamentals in their own organizations.

[Watch the video here.](#)



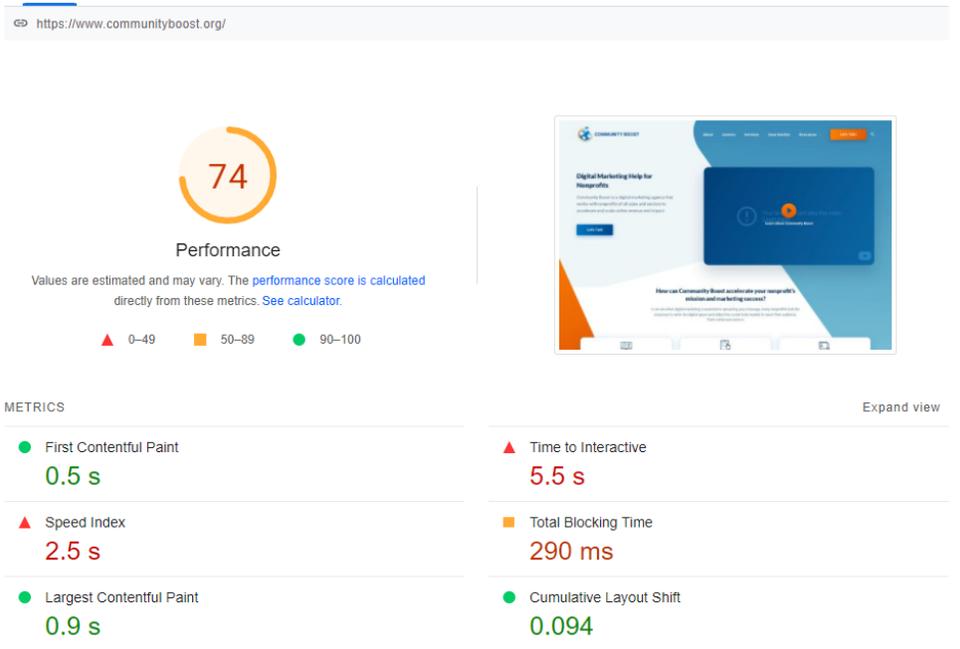
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Recommended SEO Tools

In order to create high-quality content briefs that work, you will need some tools. SEO tools help you analyze the performance of your pages/blogs, do keyword research, and more.

1. [Google Page Speed Insights](#)

This FREE tool helps you check the speed of your web pages, so you can determine where improvements need to be made.



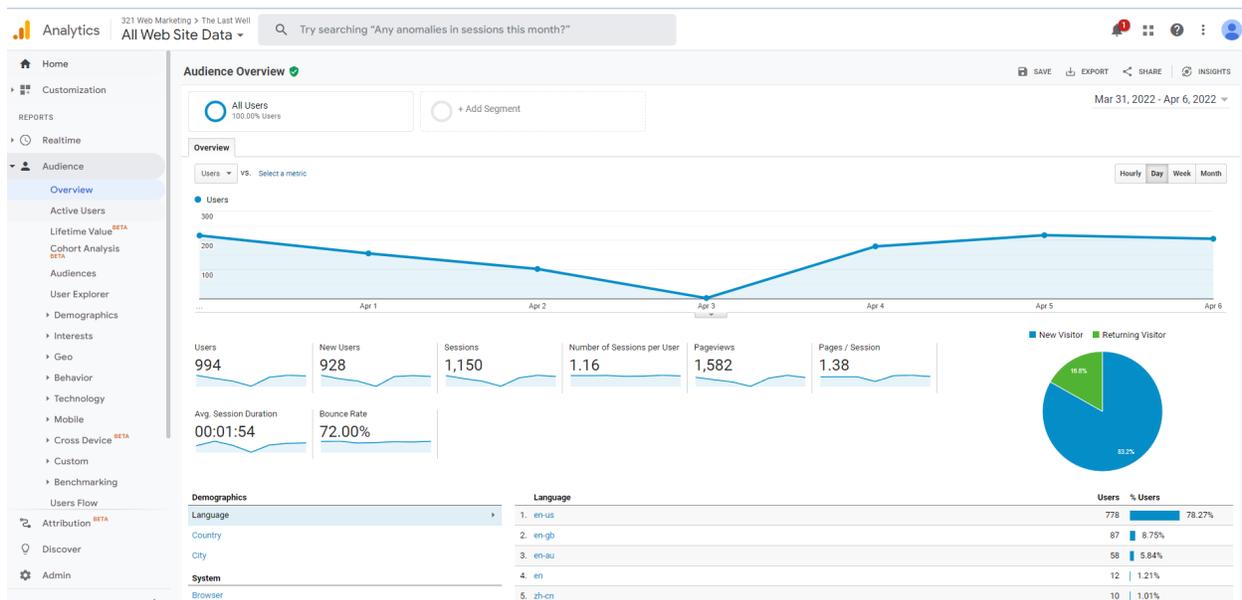
Enter any URL and it will analyze the loading time and performance of the site on either desktop or mobile. This helps you understand what the user experience is like for users that may land on your site. Page Speed Insights will grade your site on various factors as shown above.

2. [Ahrefs](#)

This tool is one of our favorites because it can do so many things. Ahrefs allows you to audit and optimize your site, find keywords, explore the top-performing content in your industry, track your ranking progress, and it includes an overall performance dashboard. This tool is unfortunately not free, however, it has shown to be a great investment for our team.

3. [Google Analytics](#)

Another free tool! Google Analytics helps you track the traffic on your website. It will break down which page gets the most traffic and where it's coming from.

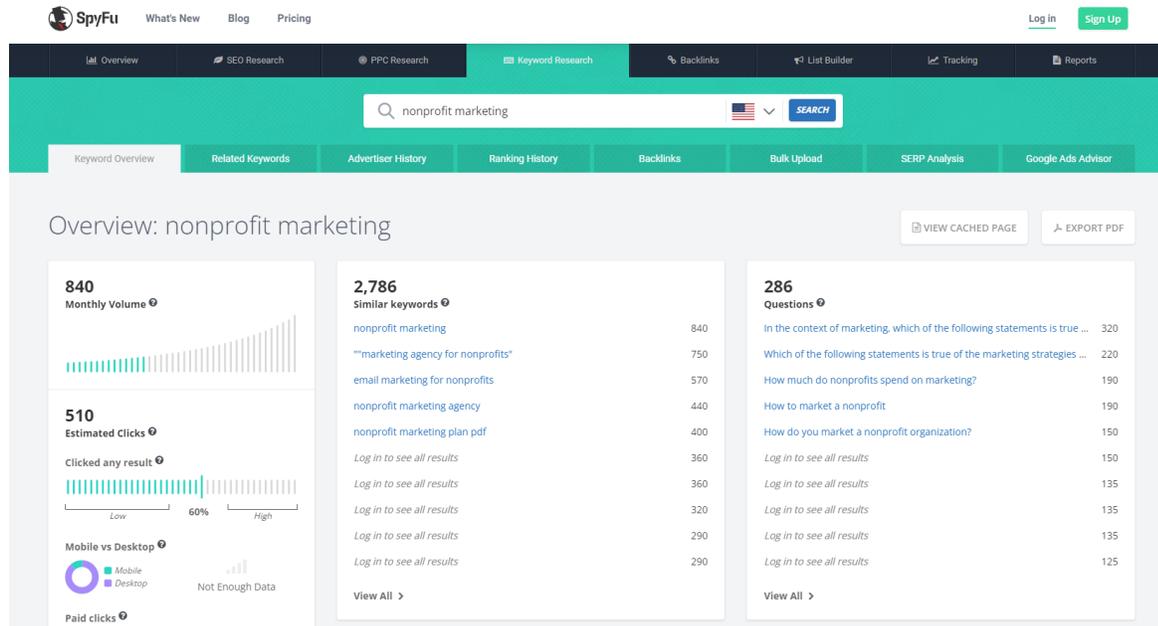


You will need to set up your account before you can begin tracking and measuring your website's data. Here's a handy blog post on how to set up your account:

[How to Create a Google Analytics Account](#)

4. [SpyFu](#)

We use SpyFu to do keyword research, but it can do much more than that. This tool provides insides on PPC research, backlinks, tracking, and competitor analysis.



5. [Yoast SEO](#)

We use this tool when we publish our blogs in WordPress. It's a plugin that helps make it easy for you to optimize your page for search engines. It also gives you suggestions on how you can improve your page. Good news - There's a free version of this plugin!

Here's what the Yoast plugin analyzed on one of our blog posts:

 SEO analysis ^
how to use tiktok

Analysis results

^ Problems (1)

 [Internal links](#): No internal links appear in this page, [make sure to add some!](#)

^ Improvements (1)

 [Keyphrase in title](#): The exact match of the focus keyphrase appears in the SEO title, but not at the beginning. [Move it to the beginning for the best results.](#)

^ Good results (13)

 [Outbound links](#): Good job!

 [Image Keyphrase](#): Good job!

 [Images](#): Good job!

 [Keyphrase in introduction](#): Well done!

 [Keyphrase length](#): Good job!

 [Keyphrase density](#): The focus keyphrase was found 34 times. This is great! 

 [Keyphrase in meta description](#): Keyphrase or synonym appear in the meta description. Well done!

 [Meta description length](#): Well done!

 [Previously used keyphrase](#): You've not used this keyphrase before, very good.

 [Keyphrase in subheading](#): 5 of your H2 and H3 subheadings reflect the topic of your copy. Good job!

 [Text length](#): The text contains 1654 words. Good job!

 [SEO title width](#): Good job!

 [Keyphrase in slug](#): Great work!



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How To Create A Content Brief

A content brief is a document that contains the direction and details of what the piece you are writing will include. When you are writing for SEO, content briefs can be particularly helpful in making sure your content will perform well. Everything you write for your blog should have a purpose, provide value, or answer a question - and it also needs to contain the basic SEO elements. You want to make sure your hard work pays off!

Step 1: Keyword Research

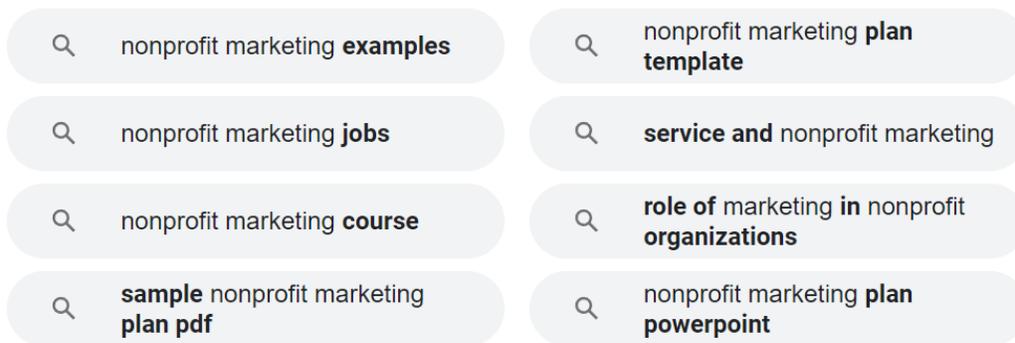
Using your keyword research tool, determine which keyword(s) you are going to use for this piece of content.

In order to do keyword research, we recommend brainstorming relevant topics in your industry. Then, put yourself in your audience's shoes. What might they be searching for on Google? What questions can you answer for them? Add all of these ideas to your brainstorming list.

Research terms that are related to the terms you identified while brainstorming. See what results come up when you Google search the terms on your list.

Use Google's related search terms at the bottom of your page to find more keyword ideas. Here's an example of the related terms that are displayed for the search term, "Nonprofit marketing."





Lastly, you will want to conduct competitor research. What are your competitors creating content about? What organizations appeared in the search results when you researched the keywords you'd like to use.

Step 2: Access Your SEO Tools (See our list of preferred tools)

Use SEO tools to search for some of the keywords you've listed during step 1. Enter a keyword or phrase into the tool to determine the keyword difficulty and see what content is ranking for that term.

Identify which keyword you will focus on using for this specific content brief.

Step 3: Identify Existing Related Content

- A content brief may be an edit of pre-existing content on a site or the creation of an entirely new piece of content. The type of content brief is dependent upon the quality and quantity of the existing related content on the site.
- If there is existing content on the website related to the keywords, the content brief can focus on:
 - Collecting back-links to put in anchor text in the content.
 - Adjusting the format (correcting headers and adding structured data)
 - Creating new headers, title tags, and slugs

- If there is no existing related content on the site, the content brief can focus on:
 - Observing what ranking competitor’s content contains
 - Creating the structure for a new content piece based on ranking content and other SEO best practices

Step 4: Begin Filling In Your Content Brief Template

- Always make a copy of the content brief outline template for each new blog post you create.
- Under “Competitive Examples” place URLs of existing ranking content that follow SEO best practices that you can use as inspiration.
- In the “Existing Content”, place the URLs of existing related content
- Under the content section, organize potential headers and suggestions for content based on SEO best practices and ranking content.

Let’s take a look at an example:



The Anatomy of an SEO Content Brief

[Insert Topic of Blog Here] | [Your Organization]

Content Strategy	
A brief summary of your content strategy can go here. Always remember the purpose of your content!	

URL	[What will the proposed URL of your blog be?]
Title	[Topic of your blog here]
H1	[Actual title of your blog here]
Meta Description	[Brief 1-2 sentence summary of your blog post here]
Word Count	[About how long will this blog be?]

Keyword Targets	Monthly Search Volume	Keyword Variation Usage Goal
[This is where you list the keywords you will be using in order of search volume]	[Use your keyword research tool to determine this]	5x
		2-3x
		2-3x
		1-2x
		1-2x



Related Keywords

- Google utilizes semantically related terms to further understand and rank pages. These related terms don't need to contain the keyword targets but they should be associated or relevant to the head keyword.
- You will need your keyword research tool to list these terms here.

Competitive Examples

- Here is where you list the links of other blog posts on the same topic that are currently ranking for the keywords you plan to use for this piece.
- These examples can be used as inspiration and to challenge yourself to create a piece with even more value.

Content Layout Structure

- Headers provide structure and context to your content which helps both the user and search engine. H2s can serve as main topics and H3s-H4s shall serve as subtopics. Keywords should be included in headers.

<H1> Header/Title

This is where the intro paragraph would go. If there are multiple paragraphs just be sure they are no longer than 4-5 lines each.

- <H2> Heading

Text goes here describing what content will be talked about or listed below in H3 and H4 headings.



- <H3> Sub Content To H2 Topic Listed Above. This could be bulleted info or numbered content
 - <h4> Sub content to above H3 Content. This could be bulleted info or numbered content
 - <h4> Bullet 2. Include as many bullets as needed.
- <H3> Heading
 - More content included here if needed. Can be H4 format or just paragraph format

- <H2> Heading

The text here can be multi-paragraphs. We just include H3 and 4 in case there are sub-points

- <H3> Heading

Paragraph under H3 heading.

Use as many headers as you need to complete your post.

Existing Linking Recommendations

- Internal links help to improve site architecture, authority distribution, and user experience. When we're assessing their content we should also check for broken status 4xx links and make these recommendations within these sections.

URL	Proposed Anchor Text
[Paste the URL of your existing blog posts here]	[What words within your writing will be hyperlinked]

Example of a Completed Content Brief

SEO Content Brief | Community Boost Consulting

Content Strategy	
Optimize existing content by rewriting, restructuring, and refreshing various attributes on-page. Refreshing existing content will likely result in an increase in traffic due to improved visibility within Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) for keyword targets and related terms.	

URL	Proposed: what-is-seo
Title	Proposed: What Is SEO? / Community Boost Consulting
H1	Proposed: What Is Search Engine Optimization
Meta Description	Proposed: Search Engine Optimization is a complex process that
Word Count	Proposed: 1,500-2,000

Keyword Targets	Monthly Search Volume	Keyword Variation Usage Goal
What is SEO Marketing	3.5k	5x
What is SEO Writing	450	2-3x
How to make an SEO strategy	50	1-3x

Related Keywords

- Google utilizes semantically related terms to further understand and rank pages. These related terms don't need to contain the keyword targets but they should be associated or relevant to the head keyword.

Related Keywords

 Copy

 Export

KEYWORD

Load Metrics (uses 8 credits)

what is seo writing

types of seo

seo meaning in business

how to do seo

search engine optimization example

google seo

what is seo ahrefs

what is seo backlinko

Competitive Examples

- <https://www.semrush.com/blog/what-is-seo/>
- <https://neilpatel.com/what-is-seo/>
- <https://searchengineland.com/guide/what-is-seo>

Content Layout Structure

- Headers provide structure and context to your content which helps both the user and search engine. H2s can serve as main topics and H3s-H4s shall serve as subtopics. Keywords should be included in headers.

<H1> What is SEO Marketing?

Add a paragraph about what SEO is, and why it's important to focus on in your marketing mix.



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- <H2> How Does SEO Work

Mention search engine algorithms and how different aspects of a website's structure can affect organic rankings.

- <H3> On-Page SEO

- Information about what on-page SEO is, how it helps Google's algorithm

- <H4> Content
 - Talk about how SEO focuses on creating relevant content that answers user's queries
 - <H4> Title Tags
 - Talk about what title tags are, and how they help the search engine's algorithm
 - <H4> Meta Descriptions
 - Talk about what meta descriptions are and how they help the search engine's algorithm
 - <H4> Header Structure
 - Outline the proper header structure used in SEO and mention how it signifies to google the contents of the content.
 - <H4> Keywords
 - Mention what keywords are and how to include them throughout the content in order to rank for them.

- <H3> Off-Page SEO

- Paragraph about how search engines want to send users to reliable websites that are credible sources. Mention how backlinks help to signify to search engines that websites are credible

- <H3> Technical SEO

- Mention Google's emphasis on fast loading and high performing websites. Talk about things that can affect technical SEO such as site speed.

- <H2> Why Is SEO Important for Marketing?

Paragraph about why SEO is important and how it's a sustainable solution to bringing in search traffic through search engines.

- <H2> How To Start an SEO Strategy

Paragraph about how it's never too late to start SEO, and how it's essential to think of SEO while making improvements to a website

- <H3> Benchmark Current SEO Performance
 - Determine how your website is currently performing organically.
- <H3> Define SEO Marketing Goals
 - Based on the current performance, decide what elements to focus on. What resources are most important to have on the SERP.
- <H3> Keyword Research
 - Recap what a keyword is and how to find keywords using different SEO tools like Ahrefs, SEMRush and SpyFu
- <H3> Create a Content Strategy
 - Based on the search traffic, build out a content plan to target the ideal keywords and goals.
- <H3> Create an Off-Page SEO Strategy
 - Talk about how to identify backlinks and reach out to other website owners to acquire backlinks.

Existing Linking Recommendations

- Internal links help to improve site architecture, authority distribution, and user experience. When we're assessing their content we should also check for broken status 4xx links and make these recommendations within these sections.

URL	Proposed Anchor Text
Example-seo-resource.com	SEO Strategy
another-example-resource.com	Keyword Research

Blank Content Brief Template

Your turn to try it out! Copy and paste this blank version into a new Google Doc to start using this template for yourself.

SEO Content Brief | MAKE A COPY

Content Strategy	
Optimize existing content by rewriting, restructuring, and refreshing various attributes on-page. Refreshing existing content will likely result in an increase in traffic due to improved visibility within Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) for keyword targets and related terms.	

URL	Proposed:
Title	Proposed:
H1	Proposed:
Meta Description	Proposed:
Word Count	Proposed:

Keyword Targets	Monthly Search Volume	Keyword Variation Usage Goal
		5x
		2-3x
		2-3x
		1-2x
		1-2x

Related Keywords

-

Competitive Examples

-

Content Layout Structure

-

<H1> Header/Title

- <H2> Heading
 - <H3> Heading
 - <h4>
 - <h4>
 - <H3> Heading
- <H2> Heading
 - <H3> Heading

Existing Linking Recommendations

URL	Proposed Anchor Text



SEO Content Checklist

Use this checklist for every blog post you write to ensure your content is ranking as high as possible in the search engines when you publish it on your website.

- 1,500-2,000 words minimum
- Include a meta description and be sure that the focus keyword is in the meta description
- Lists should be numbered if they are to be followed in a specific order, otherwise use bullets
- Use headers (H2 and H3) to break up large blocks of text
- Include at least 3 internal links to your own content (linking to posts that are already ranking well, will help them rank even higher)
- Use the main keyword in the blog at least 5 times, with related keywords 2-3 times
- Set all links in the blog post to open in a new tab
- Include 2 external links/citations (must be highly credible websites)
 - Never link to a competitor
- Keep paragraphs short. No longer than 4-5 lines.
- Use a combination of 1-3 images, videos, and/or embedded social media posts
- Write relevant alt text on each image
- Include the author bio at the bottom of every post. This improves authority (and therefore rankings)
- CTA: Each post will have one main call to action. This should be included towards the beginning and end of every blog post.

